



"How Is He, Doctor?" Asked Hartley, Anxious.



#### SYNOPSIS.

Mr. Solomon Pratt began comical narration of story, introducing well-to-do Nathan Scudder of his town, and Edward Van Brunt and Martin Hartley, two rich New Yorkers seeking rest. Because of latter pair's lavish expenditure of money, Pratt's first impression was connected with lunatics. The arrival of James Hopper, Van Brunt's valet, gave Pratt the desired information about the New Yorkers. They wished to live what they termed "The Natural Life." Van Brunt, it was learned, was the successful suitor for the hand of Miss Agnes Page, who gave Hartley up. "The Heavenlies" hear a long story of the domestic woes of Mrs. Hannah Jane Purvis, their cook and maid of all work. Decide to let her go and engage Sol. Pratt as chef. Twins agree to leave Nate Scudder's abode and begin unavailing search for another domicile. Adventure at Fourth of July celebration at Eastwich.

#### CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

Now I've been calling the place where they had the races and so on a field. Well, twa'n't really a field, but just part of the course where they had trotting matches on cattle show days. There was a fence on each side of it and across the ends of the section they was using there was ropes stretched. Back of the fences was the crowd on foot, and back of the ropes was more of 'em, but behind these ropes likewise was lots of horses and wagons and carry-alls and such. Every wagon was piled full of people, and amongst 'em I could see the Barry coach, with the four gray steppers prancing up and down in front of it and old Commodore Barry and his son on the front seat, with the women folks behind.

Well, when that pig started he made a straight course for the lower end of the field, but the sight of the horses and all scared him, I guess, and he jibed and back he came again. Half a dozen of the pig-chasers—them that was nearest to him when he came about—ran into each other and piled up in a heap, squirming like an eel-pot. They got up in a jiffy and started over again, meeting the gang that was coming back on the second lap.

By the time that pig had made three laps round that course he was a candidate for the hogs' lunatic asylum. Twice he'd been grabbed, once by the ears and once by a leg, but his liveliness and the grease had got him clear. About half the boys had given up the job, and was making for harbor behind the fence; covered with sand and grease, they was, and red and ashamed. The crowd was pretty nigh as crazy as the pig, only with joy. Even Hartley was laughing out loud—first time I'd ever heard him.

That little chap with the red hair had been right up with the mourners till the third round; then he was stood on his head in the scuffle and left behind down by the ropes in front of where the Barrys was. The rest of the chasers were scattered around the other end of the field, with the pig doing the grand right and left in and out amongst their legs. One of the boys—that big lanky one whose cheeks needed mowing—made a flying jump and dove head first right on top of the critter's shiny black back. In a shake he was the underpinning, so to speak, of a sort of monument of boys, all fighting like dogs over a woodchuck.

Next thing I knew the pig shot out from underneath the pile same as if he's been fired out of a cannon. He was squealing when he began to fly

and squealing when he lit, but his running tackle hadn't been hurt any. Down the field he went and the only one of the chasers in front of him was that little red head. He makes a grab, misses, and the pig keeps straight on, right into the crowd of men and horses and carriages.

"Look out!" yells everybody. "Let him go!" But that little shaver wa'n't built that way. Under the ropes he dives, right where the jam of wheels and hoofs was thickest. The Barry coach horses rared up and jumped and backed. You could hear wheels grinding and men yelling and women screaming.

I was one of the first over that fence, but quick as I was, that Hartley invalid was quicker. As a general thing he moved like 'twas hardly worth while to drag one foot after the other; but now he flew. I could see his big shoulders shoving folks over like they was ninepins. Under the ropes he went and in where the tangle was the worst. And then it closed up into a screeching, kicking whirlpool like. Down he went and I lost sight of him.

Everybody on the grounds was crazy, but I callate I was the worst Bedlamite of the lot. Somehow I felt responsible. 'Twas me that told about the Fourth of July doing first and got him over there. 'Twas me that coaxed him into staying for the con-sarned pig business. And I kind of felt that I was his guardian, as you might say, now that Van Brunt wa'n't along. Yes, and by ginger, I liked him! Course I thought of the poor little boy, too, but I'm free to say 'twas Hartley that I thought of most.

For the doings of the next two or three minutes you'll have to ask somebody else. All's I remember real well is catching hold of Issachar Tidbit's Sunday cutaway and ripping it from main truck to keelson. You see, Issachar was trying to back out of the tangle and I was diving in. Next thing I'm sure of is hanging onto the bridle of one of the Barry horses and playing snap the whip with my feet, up and down and over and under.

She cleared up some finally and there was a ring of folks jamming and pushing and climbing between wheels and under wagon bodies, and in the middle of the ring was Hartley, kneeling on the ground and looking pretty middling white and sick, with a dripping dot over his eye, and with that little shaver's red head in his lap. And old Doc Bailey was there, but how or when he come I don't know. Yes, me and the pig was there, too, but the critter was out of commission, being dead, and I was too busy to think where I was.

"How is he, doctor?" asked Hartley, anxious.

The Doc didn't answer for a minute or so; he was bending over the boy, sponging and swabbing like all possessed. Poor little chap; he looked white and pitiful enough, stretched out there amongst that crowd of strangers and not a soul of his own folks around to look out for him. And he was such a gritty little mite. I looked at him; chalk white he was, and still, with his eyes shut and his breath coming kind of short and jerky. And—well, my breath got jerky, too. "How is he?" says Hartley again.

Just as he said it the boy stirs and begins to breathe more regular. The doctor seemed to feel better. "He'll come round all right now,"

says the Doc. "Twas the kick that knocked him out. The pig got the worst of it and that saved him. There are no bones broken. But he'd have been trampled to death afterwards if it hadn't been for you, sir. Better let me fix up that cut."

But the Twin shook his head kind of impatient. "Tend to the boy," he says. So the doctor went on with his sponging and swabbing and pretty soon the youngster opens his eyes. "Did I get him?" says he.

"What's that?" asked the Doc, stooping over.

"Did I get the pig? Is the fiver comin' to me?"

Well, you'd ought to have heard the crowd laugh. Somebody sings out, "Three cheers for the kid," and they give 'em with a whoop.

"What's the matter with youse?" says the youngster, setting up and looking around, dizzy like. "Aw, cut it out!" he says, when they begun to holler some more. "Did I get the pig?"

"You bet you did," says the doctor, laughing. "You're a spunky little rooster. Whose boy are you, anyway? Belong in Eastwich?"

"Naw," says the little feller, like he was plumb disgusted. "N'York."

Hartley smiled. "A brother out-cast," says he, looking up at me.

Major Phinney had been shoving through the crowd and now he tell me, he used to be in war time—after the fighting was over.

"He's one of them Fresh Air boys," says the major, puffing, but pompous. "There's a summer school of 'em been started just outside the town here. Couple of New York women brought the tribe down last week. This one's one."

Little red head turned to Hartley. "Say," he says, "don't you tell her." "Tell who?" says Martin.

"The teacher, Miss Agony." "Miss which?"

And just then here comes Issachar, his cutaway hanging graceful and ornamental from the collar and pilot-ing a mighty pretty and stylish young woman to the front. She breaks loose from him and runs for'ard and flops down on her knees.

"Why, Dennis! Why, Dennis!" she says. "How could you run away and behave like this? Are you hurt? Is he—"

She looks up at Hartley as she begins to ask the last question. And he was staring at her as white as a sheet of paper.

"Why, Agnes!" he says. And she went white, too, and then red. "Oh!" says she. And then "Oh!" again. "Oh, Martin!"

#### CHAPTER V.

The Cruise of the "Dora Bassett."

After that there was a kind of tableau, same as them they have at church sociables. Here was Hartley staring at the young woman, and the young woman staring at him, and the boys staring at both of 'em, and me staring at the three, and the crowd around doing grand double-back-action staring at the whole of us. Then the party broke up, as you might say.

Hartley, red as a beet now, got up and bowed. The young woman got up too and held out her hand in a doubting sort of way. But afore he could take it, she seemed to remember something, or changed her mind, for she dropped the hand and turned to the boy, who was on his feet by this time looking down at the relics of his clothes. And between grease and sand and dirt and rags they made a ruin that was worth looking at—made you think of a rubbish pile with a red danger lantern on top.

"You naughty boy!" says she. "How could you do so? If you knew how frightened Miss Talford and I have been. Are you hurt, dear?"

"Naw," says the dear, brisk and disgusted. "Sure I ain't."

The young woman fidgeted around him, petting and "pooring" him and pinning him together, so to speak. Hartley fidgeted too, not seeming to have his bearings at all. He acted to me like he wished he was ten thousand miles away; and yet I callate he didn't really wish it neither. The doctor and Major Phinney were fussing around and the crowd kept getting bigger and closing in.

"If you'll excuse me, miss," says I, interfering as usual where 'twas none of my affairs. "I think perhaps 'twould be a good idea if we went somewhere where 'twan't so popular. Maybe we might go into one of the rooms at the hall or somewhere."

"Why, of course!" says Hartley, grabbing at the notion like 'twas a rope I'd throwa out to him. "We'll go to the hall. Ag—Miss Page, let me present my friend, Mr. Solomon Pratt."

So 'twas the Page girl, after all. I'd guessed as much, though how she come to be in Eastwich when she'd ought to have been in Europe was more'n I could make out. She looked up at me and reached out her little hand with a kid glove on it. Like-wise she smiled—not with her mouth alone, same as an undertaker meeting the relatives of the departed, but with her eyes too. 'Twas the right kind of a smile. I'm vaccinated and not subject to women folks as a rule, but I'd have done considerable to get a deckload of them smiles.

"I'm v'ry glad to know you, Mr. Pratt," says she, just as though she meant it. And we shook hands—really shook 'em.

Afore I could get over that shake and smile enough to be sensible, Major Philander shoved her arm into his and headed for the hall. D'rat his figurehead! You never could beat that old image when there was a pretty woman around. Hartley looked

kind of set back like. Then he takes the boy by the hand and falls into the major's wake. Me and the doctor trailed along behind.

The Doc kept talking about what a brave thing the Twin's diving under the horses was, but I didn't hear more than half of it. I was watching the Page girl's hat and thinking how much prettier 'twas than the ones them boarder girls at the hotel wore. And yet there wa'n't a quarter so many feathers and ribbons and doodads on it.

The little chap was chirping up to Hartley all the way. What worried him was when he was going to get his five dollars. Martin told him he'd get it all right. He'd advance it himself and collect it afterwards.

"What's your name, son?" says he to the youngster.

"Denny," says the boy.

"Denny? Dennis, you mean? Dennis what?"

"Aw, I don't know. Plain Denny, I guess."

"Where do you live in New York?" "Over around Cherry street most of the time. Me and the old man used to hang out in the back room of Mike Donahue's place on Mott street till he got sent up. Thea I got to sellin' papers and doin' shines and things. Sometimes I'd take a shy at the News-boys' Home nights. That's where Miss Agony—Miss Page, I mean—found me. I'm one of the Fresh Air kids over to her place."

"Many more like you over there?" "Sure! nine or ten of us; girls and all. We been here a week now. I skinned out of the window this mornin' and hooped it over here. Wanted to see the show. Gee! what a gang of jays! You're the guy what put up the candy for me, ain't you?"

"Shouldn't wonder. Do you like your teacher?"

"Bet your life. She's a peach. So's the other one; Miss Talford her name is."

"Humph! What do they call you over on the east side when you're at home?"

"Reddy," says the little shaver. Hartley looked down at him and smiled one of his quiet grins.

"Bully for you, Reddy!" says he. "You're a brick."

We got through the crowd and into the hall finally. Shutting the door was a job. The folks outside seemed to think they'd been cheated. I'd like to have got rid of Philander, but you couldn't do that without a block and tackle; he stuck to Miss Page like a kedge anchor to mud bottom.

The doctor was putting a strip of sticking plaster on Hartley's forehead. The cut wa'n't nothing but a scratch, I'm glad to say.

After a spell I see my chance and I cornered the major and commenced to talk politics. He was hankering for the county representative nomination and I knew his soft spot. Hartley and the Page girl got together then, but they didn't seem to know what to say.

I heard her explaining that she hadn't gone to Europe at all. Her ma had been took sick; nothing to speak of, I judged, spell of "nerves" or the like of that. So Agnes and her chum, this Margaret Talford, had seen the chance they'd been waiting for and had got their poor children tribe together and come down and took the Lathrop place at South Eastwich. Seems Miss Talford had hired it afore, intending to go to the Fresh Air v'yage alone, long's she couldn't get Agnes to go it with her.

"But how is it that you're here?" says she. "I thought you were at the mountains."

Hartley explained that, at the last moment, he had decided to try the seashore. He was at Wellmouth for the present, he said.

"But you should have known I was here," she says. "I wrote to—Ed, of course—before I left the city. Oh, I see! I sent the letter to your Adirondack address. But it should have been forwarded."

Hartley stammered a little, but he said quiet that he was afraid perhaps Van Brunt hadn't thought to send word to have his mail forwarded.

"I see," she says. "That's like Ed." Martin seemed to think 'twas too, but all he said was, "He's written you very faithfully. His letters, of course, have gone to Liverpool."

Well, that was about all. We had to be going. I said good-by and we started for the door. Miss Page came over and held out her hand.

"Mr. Hartley," says she, "I want to thank you for saving Dennis; Major Phinney told me about it. It was brave. And I'm glad that you're not hurt."

She was pretty nervous, but a good deal less flustered than he was when he took her hand.

"It was nothing, of course," he says, hurried like. "That youngster was worth picking up. Good morning, Miss Page."

He stopped a second to say something about Van Brunt no doubt coming over to see her in a day or so. And then we left the hall and headed for the street.

We walked along pretty brisk for a ways, neither of us saying much of anything. Whatever there was I callate I said. By and by we come to the railroad crossing. And here Hartley stops short.

"Sol," says he, "I believe I'll go back by train. I don't feel like a sea trip this afternoon. That—er—that crack on the head has shaken me up some, I guess. Explain to Van, will you? Tell him I'm all right, but that I've got a little headache. Understand?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Getting in. Generally a man "enters" politics in about the same way that a six-dollar-a-week clerk "accepts" a position.

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#### A Nice Hint.

"I know what I'll do," said the girl whose bashful lover would not propose. "I'll go out as a trained nurse."

"But that is a profession. You know nothing about it," he replied. "Haven't I had six months' experience sitting up nights with you?"—Illustrated Bits.

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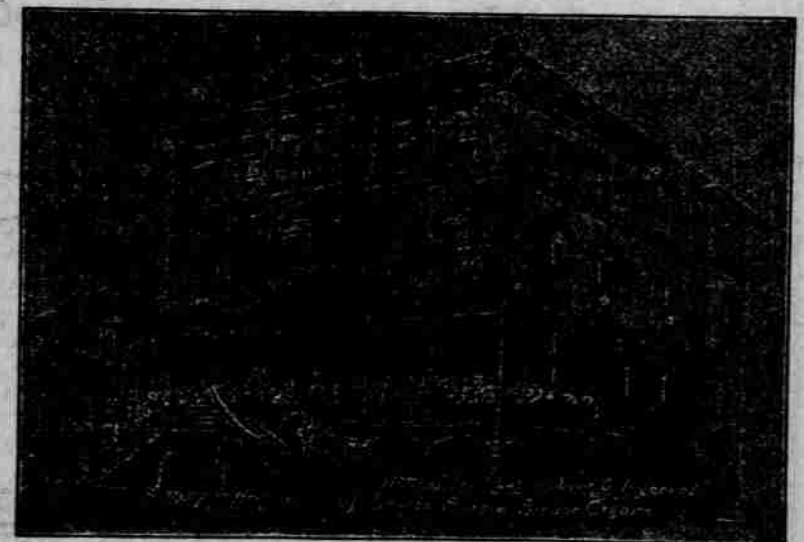
—Paul Morton.

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